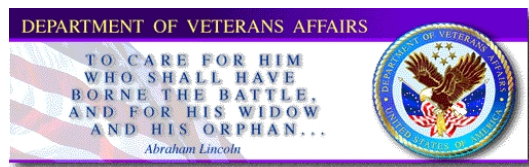


## ***VA FACILITIES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AND SOUTHERN NEVADA***

VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare  
System (310) 478-3711  
VA Long Beach Healthcare System  
(562) 826-8000  
VA Loma Linda Healthcare System  
(909) 825-7084  
VA San Diego Healthcare System  
(858) 552-8585  
VA Southern Nevada Healthcare  
System (702) 636-3000

### ***OIF/OEF COORDINATORS***

Patricia Epps, Los Angeles  
(310) 268-3030  
Gisele Battle, Long Beach  
(562) 826-8000 Ext. 3354  
Natalie Stalnaker, Loma Linda  
(909) 825-7084 Ext. 1641  
Roxane Rivers, San Diego  
(858) 642-6482 Ext. 6782  
Laura Kempf, Las Vegas  
(702) 636-6302



## **VET CENTERS**

**Anaheim Vet Center**  
562-596-3101  
**Corona Vet Center**  
800-523-7052  
**Las Vegas Vet Center**  
702-251-7873  
**E. Los Angeles Vet Center**  
323-728-9966  
**Los Angeles Vet Center**  
310-767-1221  
**West Los Angeles Vet Center**  
310-641-0326  
**San Bernardino Vet Center**  
909-890-0797  
**San Diego Vet Center**  
619-294-2040  
**Sepulveda Vet Center**  
818-892-9227  
**Ventura Vet Center**  
805-585-1860  
**Vista Vet Center**  
760-643-2070

## **HELPFUL WEBSITES**

[www.patiencepress.com](http://www.patiencepress.com)  
[www.ncptsd.org](http://www.ncptsd.org)  
[www.ptsdalliance.org](http://www.ptsdalliance.org)  
[www.sidran.org/survivor.html](http://www.sidran.org/survivor.html)  
[www.trauma-pages.com](http://www.trauma-pages.com)



05-20811/Sept05

# **Recognizing and Coping With Stress**

***For Operation Iraqi Freedom  
(OIF) / Operation Enduring  
Freedom (OEF) Veterans***



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## WELCOME HOME OIF/OEF VETERANS!

### RECOGNIZING AND COPING WITH STRESS

Since you have been home, have you ever:

- Felt so tense, discouraged, depressed, angry or sad - or even self-destructive that you weren't sure you could cope?
- Felt constantly on guard or watchful, or been on edge or jumpy, more than you really needed to be?
- Had trouble falling asleep or staying asleep?
- Had disturbing thoughts or dreams about the war?
- Felt like isolating yourself, and did not want to associate with friends or family members?
- Found yourself drinking alcohol heavily or using street drugs?

If so, this information is for you.

#### EVERYONE EXPERIENCES STRESS

Stress is a normal response of the body and mind. Everyone feels stress when dealing with major life events, illness, injury, or daily hassles and pressures.

*Physical* signs of stress may include rapid heartbeat, headaches, muscle aches, stomach aches, or feelings of tension.

*Emotional* signs of stress may include frustration, nervousness, irritability, anxiety or anger.

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Stress that occurs after a trauma, such as being in a war or serious accident, being a victim of violent crime, or seeing others injured or killed, is called **POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)**.

**PTSD** is *A NORMAL RESPONSE TO ABNORMAL STRESS*. Experiencing this kind of stress *does not mean* that you are weak, stupid, crazy or a failure in your military role. It *does* mean that you are a normal person who has been exposed to the severe, abnormal, and overwhelming stress of war.

#### TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGING STRESS

You may be able to manage your stress by:

- physical and mental relaxation
- exercise or sports
- taking a break or resting when necessary
- seeing and talking to friends
- listening to music
- working on hobbies
- writing a journal or diary
- going back to work or school
- practicing your religious faith or talking with a priest, minister, rabbi, elder or practitioner in your faith

#### VA IS HERE FOR YOU

VA Health Care for Veterans in  
Southern California and Southern Nevada  
**Putting Veterans First**

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In addition to these methods, or if you are feeling overwhelmed by stress, it may be time to seek some help.

The **Department of Veterans Affairs** has many specialized services for combat veterans. Your local **VA Health Care Center** has a special **OIF/OEF Veterans Coordinator** who is there to help you access VA services for physical problems or for PTSD.

Your local **VA Health Care Center**, as well as the network of **Vet Centers**, have specialized programs for helping OIF/OEF veterans who are experiencing PTSD reactions, anxiety, depression or similar problems. The OIF/OEF Veterans Coordinator at the VA Health Care Center will tell you how to enroll in the VA system and how to access the care you need. At your VA Health Care Center you will find knowledgeable, caring staff, and will have an opportunity to interact with other veterans, to learn how they have handled similar problems.

**No one can do everything by  
himself or herself.**

**When you need help with stress, contact  
your local VA facility or Vet Center.**